OF THE INFALLIBILITIE OF THE CHVRCH OF ROME.

A Diſcourſe written by the Lord Viſcount

FALKLAND.

Now firſt publiſhed from a Copy of his owne hand.

[Lucius Cary]

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OF THE INFALLIBILITIE of the Church of ROME.

TO him that doubts whether the Church of *Rome have* any errours, they anſwer, that She *hath* none, for She never *can* have any. This being ſo much harder to beleive then the firſt, had need be proved by ſome *certaine* arguments, if they expect that the beleife of this one ſhould draw on whatſoever elſe they pleaſe to propoſe: Yet this is offered to be proved by no better wayes then thoſe by which *we* offer to prove ſhe *hath erred*: Which are, arguments from *Scripture*, *Reaſon*, and Ancient Writers; all which, *they* ſay themſelves, are fallible; for nothing is not ſo but the Church; which if it be the onely infallible determination, and that can never be beleived upon *it's owne* authority, we can never *infallibly know* that the Church is infallible: for theſe other wayes of proofe (they ſay) may deceive both them and us; and ſo neither ſide is *bound* to beleive them. § 1.

If they ſay, that an argument out of *Scripture* is ſufficient ground of *Divine faith*, why are they ſo offended with the Proteſtants for beleiving *every part* of *their* Religion upon that ground, upon which they build *all theirs* at once? and if following the ſame Rule with equall deſire of finding the truth by it, (having neither of thoſe qualities, which *Iſidorus Peluſiota* ſayes, are the cauſes of all Hereſies; ἀυθάδειαν καὶ πρόληψιν, *Pride* and *Prejudication*) why ſhould God be more offended with the one then the other, though they chance to erre? § 2.

§ 3. They say, the *Church* is therefore made *infallible* by God, that all men may have some *certaine* Guide; yet though it *be* infallible, unlesse it both plainly *appeare* to be so, (for it *is* not certaine to whom it doth not *appeare* certaine) and unlesse it be manifest *which* is the *Church*, God hath not attained his end; and it were to set a Ladder to Heaven and seeme to have a great care of my going up, whereas unlesse there be care taken that I may *know* this Ladder is *here* to that purpose, it were as good for me it had never beene set.

§ 4. If they say we *may know* it, for that *Generall* and constant *Tradition* instructs us in it, I answer, that *ignorant* people *cannot know* this, and so it can be no Rule for *them*; and if *learned* people mistake in this, there can be no condemnation for *them*. For suppose to know whether the *Church* of *Rome* may erre, (as a way which will conclude *against* her, but not *for* her; for if She *hath* erred, certainly She *may*; but though she *hath not* erred hitherto, it followes not that She cannot erre,) I seeke whether She *have* erred; and conceiving She *hath contradicted* her self, conclude necessarily She hath *erred*; I suppose it not *damnable* though I erre in my judgement: becaus I try the *Church* by one of those touch-stones her self appoints me; which is, *Conformity with the Ancient*. For to say I am to beleive the *present Church* that it differs not from the former, though it seeme to me to doe so, is to send me to a witnesse, and bid me not beleive it.

§ 5. Now to *say* the *Church* is provided for a *Guide* of faith, but must be knowne by such markes as the *ignorant* cannot *seeke* it by, and the *learned* may chance not to *find* it by, though seeking it with all diligence and without all prejudice, can no way satisfy me.

§ 6. If they say, God will *reveale* the truth to whosoever seekes it these wayes *sincerely*; this saying *both sides will* (without meanes of being confuted) *make use of*; therefore it would be as good that *neither did*.

§ 7. When they have proved the *Church* to be *infallible*, yet to my understanding they have proceeded nothing farther, unlesse

we

we can be ſure *which is it*; for it ſignifies onely that God will *allwaies have* a *Church* which ſhall not erre; but not that ſuch or ſuch a *Succeſſion* ſhall be allwaies in the right; not that the *Biſhop* of ſuch a place, and the Clergy that adheres to him ſhall allwaies continue in the *true* faith. So that if they ſay the *Greeke* Church is not *the Church*, becauſe by it's owne confeſſion it is *not* infallible; I anſwer, that it may be *now* the *Church*, and may *hereafter* erre, and ſo not be *now* infallible; and yet *the Church never* erre; becauſe before *their* fall from truth, *others* may ariſe to maintaine it, who *then* will be the *Church*; and ſo the *Church* may *ſtill* be infallible; though not in reſpect of any ſet perſons whom we may know at all times for our Guide. § 8.

Then if they prove the *Church* of *Rome* to be the true *Church*, and not the *Greeke*, *becauſe their* opinions are conſonant either to Scripture or Antiquity, they runne into a circle, proving their *tenets* to be *true*, firſt; becauſe the *Church holds* them & then theirs to be the *true Church*, becauſe it *holds the truth*: which laſt, though it appeare to me the onely way, yet it takes away it's being a Guide which we may follow *without examination*, without which all they ſay beſides is nothing. § 9.

Nay ſuppoſe they had evinced, that *ſome Succeſſion* were infallible, and ſo had proved to a *Learned* man that the *Roman Church* muſt be *this*, becauſe none elſe *pretends* to it; yet this can be no ſufficient ground to the *ignorant*, who cannot have any *infallible* foundation for their beleife that the *Church* of *Greece pretends* not to the ſame; and even to the *Learned* it is but an *accidentall* argument, becauſe if any other company had likewiſe claimed to be *infallible*, it had overthrowne all ſo proved.

Nay it is but an *arbitrary* argument, and depends upon the § 10. pleaſure of the adverſary; for if any ſociety of Chriſtians would *pretend* to it, the *Church* of *Rome* could make uſe of it no longer.

The cheifeſt reaſon why they diſallow of the *Scripture* for *Judge*, is, becauſe when differences ariſe about the *interpretation*, there is no way to end them; and that it will not ſtand § 11. with the goodneſſe of God, to damne men for not following

his will, if he had assigned no infallible way how to finde it. I confesse this to be wonderfull true ὁ γὰρ ὕπω πάλαι ἐγὼ ὡς ἕτερα λέγειν παρὰ ὃ φρονῶ, and let them excuse themselves that thinke otherwise. Yet this will be no argument against him, who beleives that to all who follow their *reason* in the *interpretation* of the Scriptures, and search for *Tradition*, God will either give his *grace* for assistance to *finde* the truth, or his *pardon* if they *misse* it: and then this supposed *necessity* of an infallible Guide with this supposed *damnation* for want of it, fall together to the ground.

§ 12. If they command us to beleive *infallibly* the contrary to this, they are to prove it false by some *infallible* way (for the conclusion must be of the same nature, and not conclude more then the premisses set downe,) now such a way, *Scripture* and *Reason*, or *infused faith* cannot be (for they use to object the *fallibility* of them to those that build their Religion upon them) nor the *Authority* of the *Church*, for that is part of the question, and must be it selfe *first* proved, and that by none of the former wayes, for the former reasons.

§ 13. The *Popes infallibility* can be no infallible ground of faith, being it selfe no *necessary* part of the faith (& we can be no surer of any thing proved then we are of that which proves it,) and if *he* be fallible, no *part* is the more *infallible* for his sideing with them. So if the *Church* be divided, I have no way to know which is the *true Church*, but by searching which agrees with *Scripture* and *Antiquity*, and so judgeing accordingly. (But this is not to submit my selfe to her opinions as my *guide*, which they tell us is necessary.) Which course if they approve not of as a fit one for a *Learned* man, they are in a worse case for the *ignorant*, who can take no course at all, nor is the better at all for this Guide, the Church; whilest two parts dispute *which is it*, and that by arguments he understands not.

§ 14. If I granted the *Pope*, or a *Councell* by him called to be *infallible*; yet I conceive their Decrees can be no sufficient ground (by their own axiomes) of *Divine faith*. For *first* (say the most) No *Councell* is valid not approved by the *Pope* (for thus

thus they overthrow that held at *Ariminum*) and a *Pope* chosen by *Symony* is *ipso facto* no Pope. I can then have no certainer ground for the *infallibility* of those *Decrees*, and consequently for my beleife of them, then I have that the choice of him was neither directly nor indirectly *Symoniacall*; which to be certaine of, is absolutely impossible.

§ 15. *Secondly*, suppose him *Pope*, and to have *confirmed* the *Decrees*; yet that *these are* the Decrees of a Councell, or that he *hath confirmed* them, I can have but an uncontradicted attestation of many men, (for if another *Councell* should declare *these* to have beene the Acts of a *former* Councell, I should neede againe some certaine way of knowing how *this* declaration is a Councels) which is no ground (say *they*) of faith. I am sure not so good and generall a one as that Tradition by which we prove that the Scripture is Scripture, which yet they will not allow any to be certaine of but from them.

§ 16. *Thirdly*, for the *sence* of their Decrees, I can have no better expounder to follow then *Reason*; which if, though I mistake, I shall not be *damned* for following, why shall I for mistaking the sence of Scripture? Or why am I a lesse fit interpreter of *one*, then of the *other* were both seeme equally cleare? And where they seeme so (I meane equally cleare) and yet contradictory, shall I not as soone beleive *Scripture*, which is, without doubt, of at least *as great* authority?

§ 17. But I doubt whether *Councells* be fit deciders of Questions; for such they cannot be, if they beget more, and men have cause to be in greater doubts *afterwards* (none of the *former* being diminished) then they were at first.

§ 18. Now I conceive there arise so *many* out of this way, that the Learned cannot end *all* nor the Ignorant know *all*. As besides the forenamed considerations, *Who* is to *call* them, the Pope, or Kings: *Who* are to have *voices* in them; Bishops only, or Preists also: *Whether* the *Pope* or *Councell* be *Superiour*; & the *last* neede the approbation of the *first*, debated among themselves: *Whether* any Countries not being *called*, or not being there (as the *Abissines*, so great a part of *Christianity*, & not resolvedly condemned

condemend by them for *Heretiques*, were abſent at the Counceil of *Trent*) make it not *generall*: *Whether* if it be one not every where received (as when the Biſhops ſent from ſome places have exceeded their Commiſſion, as in the Councell of *Florence*) it be yet of neceſſity to be ſubſcribed to: *Whether* there were any *ſurreption* uſed or *force*, and *Whether* thoſe diſanull the Acts: *Whether* the *moſt voyces* are to be held the Act of the *Councell*, or thoſe of *all* are required, (As *Canus* ſayth, *All the Councell cannot erre, the moſt may*; which never yet agreed) or *Whether two parts* will ſerve (as in the *Tridentine* Synode,) a conſiderable doubt, becauſe, *Nicephorus Calliſtus* relateing the reſolution of a Councell at *Rome* againſt that of *Ariminum* makes them give three reaſons. One *That the Biſhop of Rome, was not preſent.* The ſecond *That moſt did not agree to it.* Thirdly *That others thither gathered were diſpleaſed at their reſolutions*: which proves, that in their opinions, if either *moſt not preſent* agree not to it, or *all preſent* be not pleaſed with it, a *Councell* hath no power to binde. All theſe doubts, I ſay, perſwade me that whatſoever brings with it ſo many *new* queſtions, can be no fit ender of the *old*.

ἕτερει τῶν ἐκεῖσι συνδεδραμηκότων τοῖς δεδογμένοις ἀπηρέσκοντο. *Tom*: 2. *pag*. 172.

§19. In thoſe things in which, *before* a Generall Councell have *defined*, it is lawfull to hold either way, and damnable to do ſo *after*; I deſire to know how it agreeth with the Charity of the Church, to *define any thing*, and ſo beſtow upon the Divell one path more for us to walke in to him?

§20. If the *infallibility* of a *Generall Councell* be a point of faith I deſire to know *why* it is ſo? Scripture and Tradition ſeeme to me not to ſay ſo: But if they did, ſo I ſuppoſe you will grant they do of this doctrine, [*That the ſoules of the bleſſed ſhall ſee God before the day of judgement, and not be kept in ſecret Receptacles*] For elſe the doctrine of prayer to Saints cannot ſtand: and yet for denying this doth *Bellarmine* excuſe Pope *John* 22 (of which beleife they know he was not alone) becauſe the *Church* (he meanes, I doubt not, a Generall Councell) had not then condemned it. I deſire to know why ſhould not *he* be condemned as well without one as many *Heretiques*

tiques that are held ſo by their Church, yet condemned by *no Generall Councell?* which if he makes to be the rule of *Hereſie*, it had beene happy to have lived before the Councell of *Nice*, when no opinion had beene damnable but ſome againſt the Apoſtles *Councell* at *Hieruſalem*, becauſe there had *yet* beene no *Generall* Councell.

At leaſt, why ſhall not I be excuſed by the ſame reaſon, § 21. though I beleive not a *Councell* to be *infallible*, ſince I never heard that any Councell hath decreed that they are *ſo?* Neither, if it have, can we be bound by that Decree, unleſſe made certaine ſome other way that it ſelfe is ſo.

If you ſay, we muſt beleive it becauſe of *Tradition*; I anſwer § 22. *ſometimes* you will have the *not beleiving any thing*, though not declared by a Councell, to have power enough to damne (that is when it makes *againſt us*) at *other times* the *Church* hath not decreed unleſſe a Councell have, and their errour is pardonable, and they good Catholiques.

Next, (as I have asked before) how ſhall an *ignorant* man § 23. know it? for he, in likelyhood, can ſpeake but with a few, from whom he cannot know that *all* of the Church of *Rome*'s part do *now*, and in *paſt* ages have beleeved it to be *Tradition* ſo *certainely* as to make it a *ground of faith*, (unleſſe he have ſome revelation that thoſe deceive him not.) Neither indeed can thoſe that ſhould enforme him of the opinions of former times be *certainely* enformed themſelves; for truly if (as they would perſwade us) the relation of *Papias* could couſen ſo farre *all* the Prime Doctours of the Chriſtian Church into the beleife of the doctrine of the *Millenaries*, ſo as that *no one* of thoſe two firſt ages oppoſed it, (which appeares plaine enough, becauſe thoſe that after roſe up againſt this opinion, never quoted any for themſelves before *Dionyſius Alexandrinus*, who lived at leaſt two hundred & fifty yeares after Chriſt.) Nay if thoſe firſt men did not only beleeve it as *probable*, but *Juſtin Martyr* *Dial. cum* layes, *he* holds it, and ſo do *all* that are *in all parts Orthodox* *Tryph p. 307.* Chriſtians ἐγὼ γὰρ εἰ τινές εἰσι ὀρθογνώμονες καὶ πάντα χείσιανοί. *Ire-* *lib. 5. cap. 33.* *næus* ſets it downe directly for a *Tradition*, and relates the

very words that Christ used when he taught this; (which is plainer then any other *Tradition* is proved, or said to be (out of Antiquity) by them.) If (I say) *these* could be so deceived, why might not *other* of the Ancients as well be by others deceived in other points? And then, what *certainty* shall the *Learned* have, when after much labour they thinke they can make it appeare that the Ancients thought any thing Tradition, that indeed it was so? And that either the folly, or the knavery of some *Papias* deceived them not? I confesse it makes me thinke of some that *Tully* speakes of, who *(arcem amittunt, dum propugnacula defendunt)* loose the *fort*, whilest they defend the *outworkes*; for whilest they answer this way the arguments of *Tradition* for the opinion of the *Chiliasts*, they make unusefull to them the force of *Tradition* to prove any thing else by. For which cause it was rather wisely then honestly done of them, who before *Feuardentius* set him forth, left out that part of *Irenaus* which we alledge (though we need it not much, for many of the fathers take notice of this beleife of his;) Yet he justifies himselfe for doing it by a worse blow to them then this it selfe, which is, *saying*, that *if they leave out all errours in the bookes they publish* (that is, I suppose, all opinions contrary to the Church of *Rome*) *bona pars Scriptorum Patrum Orthodoxorum evaneſceret, a good part of the writings of the Orthodox Fathers must vanish away.*

§ 24. But the *Tradition* that can be found out of Ancients (since their witnessing may deceive us) hath much lesse strength when they argue only thus: Sure so *many* would not say this is *true*, and joyne in opinions, if there were no tradition for them. I would have you remember they can deliver their opinion possibly, but either *before* the controversie arise in the Church (upon some chance) or *after*. If *before*, it is confest that they write not *cautiously* enough; and so they answer all they seeme to say for *Arrius* and *Pelagius* his faith before *themselves*, and so consequently their *controversie* (though it may be not their opinion) arose. If *after*, then they answer often (if any thing be by them at that time spoken against them) that the *heat of disputation*

disputation brought it from them, and their resolution to oppose *Heretiques* enough; I desire it may be lawfull for *us* to answer so too, either one of these former wayes; or that it is (as often they say too) some *Hyperbole*, when you presse us in any thing with the opinions of Fathers. At least, I am sure if they may deceive us with *saying* a thing *is* a *Tradition*, that *is not*, we may be sooner deceived if we will *say* and conclude it for a *Tradition*, when they speake it only as a *Truth*, and (for ought appeares) their *particular Opinion*.

§ 25. For besides, if when *Salvian*, comparing the *Arrians* with evill Livers, (and that *after* they were condemned by a Councell) extenuates, (by reason of their beleiving themselves in the right) with much instance the fault of the *Arrians*, and sayes, *How they shall be punisht for it in the day of Judgement, none can know but the Judge.* If (I say) they confesse it to be his opinion, they must also confesse the doctrine of *their* Church to be different from that of *Salvians* times; because he was allowed a Member of *that* for all this *saying*; whereas he of the Church of *Rome* that should say so of *us* would be accounted *Sesqui-hæreticus*, a Heretique and a halfe: Or else they must *say* (which they can onely say and not prove) that he was so earnest against ill men, that for the aggravation of their crime he lessened that of the Heretiques; and said, what at another time he would not have said; which if they doe, will it not overthrow wholly the authority of the Fathers? Since we can never *infallibly* know what they thought at *all times*, from what they were moved to *say* by some *collaterall consideration*.

§ 26. Next to this certaine and undoubted *damning* of all out of the Church of *Rome*; which averseth me from it; next comes their putting *all to death*, or at least paines, that do so, where they have power: which is an effect, though not a necessary one, of the first opinion; and that averseth me yet more; For I doe not beleive *all* to be *damned* whom they damne, but I conceive *all* to be *killed* whom they kill. I am sure if you looke upon *Constantine's* Epistle, written to perswade concord upon the first disagreement betweene *Alexander* and *Arrius*, you will find

that *he* thought (& if the Bishops of his time had at first thought *otherwise*, he would have beene sure better informed) that *neither* side deserved either death or damnation. (and yet sure this question was as great as ever rose since:) For having spoken of the opinions as things so indifferent, that the Reader might almost thinke they had beene fallen out at Spurn-point or Ketlepins, he adds, Τὸ γὰρ ἀναγκαῖον ἓν ἐστὶ, περὶ τῆς θείας προνοίας συμφωνεῖν πάντας καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν πρεῖν πίστιν. *For that which is necessary is one thing, that all agree and keepe the same faith about divine providence.*

Niceph. Tom. 1. p. 555.

I am sure in the same Author, *Moses*, a man praised by him, refusing to be made Bishop by *Lucius* because he was an *Arrian*, and he answering, That *he did ill to refuse it before he knew what his faith was*, Answered, τὴν σὴν πίστιν δείκνυσι ἡ τοῦ σκόπων ὑποκρισία. *The banishing of Bishops shewes* E N O V G H *your faith.* So that it is plaine he thought *punishing* for opinions to be a marke which might serve him to know *false* opinions by.

Tom. 2. p. 206.

§ 27. I beleive throughout Antiquity you will find no putting any to *death*, unlesse it be such as begin to kill first, (as the *Circumcellians* or such like;) I am sure *Christian Religions* cheife glory being that it encreased by being *persecuted*, and having that advantage of the *Mahumetan* (which came in by force) me thinkes, (especially since *Synesius* hath told us, and reason told men so before *Synesius*, that τοῖς ἐναντίοις τὰ συνιστάντων ἕκαστα φθείρεται, *Every thing is destroyed by the contrary to what setled and composed it*) It should be to take ill care of *Christianity*, to seeke to hold it up by *Turkish* meanes: at least it must breed doubts, that if the Religion had alwaies remained the *same*, it would not be defended by wayes so *contrary* to those by which it was propagated.

De Regno.

§ 28. I desire recrimination may not be used: for though it be true that *Calvin* hath done it, and the Church of *England* a *little*, (which is a little too much) for *Negare manifesta non audeo, & excusare immodica non possum*, yet She, confessing She *may* erre, is not so chargeable with any fault as those which pretend they *cannot*, (and so will be sure never to mend it:) and besides, I will be bound to defend no more then I have undertaken, which is,

to

to give reasons *Why the Church of* Rome *is* fallible.

I confesse this opinion of *damning* so many, and this custome of *burning* so many, this breeding up those who know nothing else in any point of Religion yet to be in readinesse to cry *To the fire with him*, and *To Hell with him*, (as *Polybius* saith in a certaine furious faction of an army of severall nations, and consequently languages, μόνον τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο κοινῇ συνίεσαν, τό Βάλλε, *All of them understood onely this word, Throw at him*) this I say in my opinion was it cheifely which made so *many* so *suddainly* leave the Church of *Rome*, that indeed to borrow the Authors phrase, οὐ παρακλήσεως πρὸς τὴν ἀπόστασιν, ἀλλὰ ἀγγέλου ἐδεήθησαν— *They needed not perswasion to doe it but onely newes that others had begun*: For as this alone if *beleived* makes *all* the rest be so too; So one thing alone *misliked*, overthrowes also *all* the rest. § 29.

If it were granted that, because it agrees not with the *Goodnesse* of God to let men want an *infallible Guide*, therefore there *must* be one; and that the *Church* of *Rome* were that *one*; yet if that teach *any thing*, to my understanding, *contrary* to Gods *Goodnesse*, I am not to receive her doctrine, for the same cause for which they would have me receive it, (it being *as good* an argument, this *Guide* teaches things contrary to Gods *Goodnesse*, *therefore* is not appointed by God; as to say, It is agreeable to his *Goodnesse* there should be a *Guide*, *therefore* there is one) And sure it is lawfull to examine *particular* doctrines, whether they agree with that principle which is their *foundation*; and to *that* (me thinkes) to damne him that neither with *negligence* nor *prejudication* searcheth what is Gods will, though he misse of it, is as contrary as the first can be supposed. § 30.

I would know *whether* he that *never heard* of the Church of *Rõe* shall yet be damned for not beleiving her *infallible*. I have so good an opinion of them as to assure my selfe they will answer, *he shall not*. I will then aske, *Whether* he that hath searched what *Religions* there are, and finds *hers* to be one, and *her infallibility* to be part of it, if his reason will not assent to that, shall he be dãned for being *inquisitive* after *truth*? (for he hath committed no other fault greater then the other) & *Whether* such an *ignorance* § 31.

 (I meane

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(I meane after impartiall ſearch) be not of all the other the moſt *invincible?*

§ 32. Nay grant the *Church* to be *infallible*, yet me thinks, he that *denies* it and imployes his reaſon to *ſeeke* if it be true, ſhould be in as good caſe as he that *beleives* it and *ſearcheth not* at all the truth of the propoſition he receives: for I cannot ſee why he ſhould be *ſaved*, becauſe, by reaſon of his *parents* beleiſe, or the Religion of the *Countrey*, or ſome ſuch *accident*, the *truth* was offered to his underſtanding, when had the *contrary* beene offered he would have received that; and the other damned that beleeves *falſhood*, upon as good ground as the other doth *truth*; unleſſe the Church be like a Conjurers circle that will keepe a man from the Devill though he came into it by chance.

§ 33. They grant that no man is an *Heretique* that beleeves not his Hereſie *obſtinately*; and if he be no Heretique, he may ſure be ſaved. It is not then *certaine damnation* for any man to deny the infallibility of the *Roman* Church: but for him only that denies it *obſtinately*, and then I am ſafe; for I am ſure I doe not.

§ 34. Neither can they ſay I ſhall be damned for *Schiſme* though not for Hereſie, for he is as well no *Schiſmatique*, though in *Schiſme*, that is *willing* to joyne in communion with the *true* Church, when it appeares to be ſo to him; as he is no *Heretique* though he hold Hereticall opinions, that holds them not *obſtinately, that is* (as I ſuppoſe) with a deſire to be informed if he be in the wrong.

§ 35. Why, if it be not *neceſſary* alwayes to beleeve the *truth*, ſo one beleeve in generall *what the Church would have beleeved*, (for ſo they excuſe great men that have held contrary opinions to theirs now, before they were defined or they knew them to be ſo) why (I ſay) ſhall not the ſame *implicit aſſent* to whatſoever God would have aſſented to (though I miſtake what it is) be ſufficient? When indeed to beleeve *implicitly* what *God* would have beleeved is to beleeve implicitly likewiſe what the *Church* teacheth, if this doctrine be within the number of *thoſe* which God commands to be beleeved.

§ 36. I have therefore the leſſe doubt of this opinion, that I ſhall have

have no harme for not beleeving the *infallibility* of the Church of *Rome* because of my being so farre from *leaning* to the contrary, and so suffering my *will* to have power over my *understanding*, that if God would leave it to me which Tenet *should* be true, I would rather choose that that *should*, then the contrary. For they may well beleeve me, that I take no pleasure in tumbling hard and unpleasant bookes and making my selfe giddy with disputeing of obscure questions and dazled ὥσπερ οἱ ἔκ τινος ὑψηλῆς ἀκρωρείας εἰς ἀχανὲς κατακύπτοντες πέλαγος. *Cæsarius.*

If I could beleeve, there should *alwayes* be (whom I might alwayes *know*) a society of men, whose opinions must be *certainely* true, and who would ὑπὲρ τῆς ἁπάντων ἀσχολεῖσθαι σχολῆς, labour to discusse & define all arising doubts, so as I might be excusably at ease, & have no part left for me but that of obedience, which must needes be a lesse difficult and so a more agreeable way then to endure endlesse volumes of commentaries, the harsh *Greeke* of *Evagrius*, and the as hard *Latine* of *Irenæus*, and be pained by distinguishing betweene different senses and various lections, and he would deserve not the lowest place in *Bedlam* that would preferre these studies before so many, so much more pleasant, that would rather *imploy* his understanding, then *submit it*; and if he could thinke God imposed upon him only the *resisting temptations*, would, by way of addition, require from himselfe the *resolving of doubts*. I say not that *all these bookes* are to be read by *those* who understand not the languages, for *them* I conceive their seeking into *Scripture* may suffice. But if I have, by Gods grace, skill to looke into them, I cannot better use it then in the search of his will, where *they say* it is to be found, that I might assent to them if there I finde reason for it; or if I do not, they may have no excuse for not excusing *me*. § 37. *Synesius.*

For whereas they say, it is *pride* makes *us doubt* of their infallibility; I answer that their too much *lazinesse* and impatience of examining is the cause many of *them* do *not doubt*. § 38.

Next, what *pride* is it, never to assent before I find *reason* for it, (since *they*, when they follow that *Church* as *infallible*, § 39.

pretend

pretend reaſon for it, and will not ſay they would, if they thought they found none) and if they ſay, we do *finde* reaſon but will not *confeſſe* it, then pride hinders not our *aſſent*, but our *declaration* of it; which if it do in any one, he is without queſtion, αὐτοκατάκριτος, *condemned by himſelfe*, and it muſt be a very partiall advocate that would ſtrive to acquit him.

§ 40. One much prevailing argument which they make, is this, that whoſoever leave them, fall into *diſſention* betweene themſelves, whereas *they* in the meane while are alwayes at *unity*. I anſwer, *firſt*, in *this* whereof the queſtion is now, they *all* conſent. *Secondly*, when there is *fire* for them that *diſagree*, they need not bragge of their uniformity who *conſent*. *Thirdly they* have many *differences* among them (as *whether* the Pope be infallible, *Whether* God predeterminate every action, *Whether* Election and Reprobation depend upon foreſight,) Which ſeeme to me as great as any betweene their adverſaries; and in the *latter* the *Jeſuits* have Ancienter and more generall *Tradition* on their ſide, then the Church of *Rome* hath in any other queſtion; and as much ground from reaſon for the defence of Gods *goodneſſe*, as they can thinke they have for the neceſſity of an *infallible guide*; yet theſe arguments *muſt not* make the *Dominicans Heretiques*, and muſt *us*.

§ 41. If they ſay, 'The *Church* hath not *reſolved* it (which ſignifies only, *that they are not agreed about it*, which is that we object) I anſwer, It *ought* to have done, if conformity to the *ancient Church* be required, in which *all* that ever I could heare of before Saint *Auſtin* (who is very various I confeſſe in it) delivered the contrary to the *Dominicans*, as not doubtfull; and to ſay, it is *lawfull* for them to diſagree whenſoever they *do* not agree, is ridiculous: for they cannot do both at once about the ſame point.

§ 42. And if they ſay, they meane, by the Churches *not having concluded* it, that a *Councell* hath not, I anſwer that they condemne ſome without any, and why not theſe? *Next*, I ſay that the opinion of the *Diffuſed* Church is of more force then the concluſion of a *Repreſentative* (which hath its authority from the

the other,) and therefore if all extant for foure hundred yeares teach any thing, that is more Heresie to denie that then any Canon of a Councell.

But may not howsoever *any* other companie of People (that would maintaine themselves to be *infallible*) *say* as much, that all other sects differ from one another, and therefore *should* all agree with *them?* Would those not (thinke they) ascribe all other mens dissentions and learned mens falling into divers Heresies, to their not allowing *their infallibility?* to their not assenting to *their* Decrees? and not suffering them διδασκάλους τῶν ζητουμένων καθέζεσθαι, τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἐν μαθητῶν μοίρᾳ ὑπακούοντας ἔχειν, *to sit as teachers* of those things that come in question, and to have all others in the place of Disciples obedient to them? which is that which *Nilus*, a *Greeke* Bishop, professeth, that because the *Greeks* would not allow the *Romans*, was the only cause of seperation betweene them. § 43.

They use much to object, How *could* errours come into the Church without *opposition*, and *mention* both of that opposition in history? I answer, they *might* come in not at *once*, but by *degrees*; as in the growth of a childe and the motion of a clock, wesee neither in the present, but know there was a present when we finde it past. *Next*, so many Authours being *lost*, who can make it *certaine* to me that from none of those, we should have had notice of this *opposition*, if they had come to us? *Next* I say there are two sorts of errours, to hold a thing necessary that is *unlawfull* and *false*, or that is but *profitable* and *probable*: Of the *second* sort that errours should come in, it appeares not hard to me, and especially in those ages where want of *Printing* made books, and consequently learning not so common as now it is; where the few that did study busied themselves in Schoole-Speculations only, when the Authority of a man of cheife note had a more generall influence then now it hath, and so (as *Thucydides* saith the Plague did in his time, διεξήει διὰ παντὸς τοῦ σώματος τὸ ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ πρῶτον ἱδρυθὲν κακόν, the disease that first setled in the head *easily* passed through all the body,) considering how apt all men are to desire that all men § 44.

ſhould thinke as they doe, and conſequently to lay a neceſſity upon the receiving that opinion, if they conceived that a way to have it received. And then if it were beleeved *generally profitable*, (as, for example, *Confeſſion*,) who would be apt to oppoſe their calling it *neceſſary*, for the ſame cauſe for which they called it ſo? *Beſides*, if this errour were delivered by ſome Father in the *hot oppoſition* of ſome *Heretique*, it may be none of his ſide would oppoſe it, leaſt they might take advantage by their diſſention, and he that diſputed for the Orthodox ſide, might looſe by it much of his authority.

§ 45. The word [*neceſſary*] it ſelfe is often uſed for *very convenient*; and then from *neceſſary* in that ſenſe to *abſolutely neceſſary* is no *difficult* change, though it be a *great* one. The Fathers uſe *Heretiques* ſometimes in a large ſenſe, and ſometimes in a ſtricter, & to differ in the reckoning them up; Some leaving out thoſe that others put in (though they had ſeene the precedent Catalogue:) The doubtfulneſſe of the ſenſe of thoſe words might bring in errour. Names, as an *Altar*, *Sacrifice*, *Maſſe*, may have beene uſed firſt in one ſenſe, and the *name* retained though the *thing* ſignified received change; which may have beene the art of the Church of *Rome*, as it was once of an Emperour of *Rome*, *Cui proprium fuit nuper reperta* (I leave out *Scelera*) *priſcis verbis obtegere*, *whoſe property it was to cover things newly found out with ancient tearmes*. And the ſame Author tels us, that the ſame State was as it were cheated out of her liberty becauſe there did remaine, *Eadem Magiſtratuum vocabula*, *The ſame titles of Magiſtrates*; and I beleive that if the Proteſtants beyond the Seas would have thought *Biſhops* as good a word as *Superintendents*, (and ſo in other ſuch things) many, who underſtand nothing but *names*, would have miſſed the Scandall they have now taken.

§ 46. Theſe waies (I thinke) things may have come, without much *oppoſition*, from being thought *profitable* to be done, and probable to be beleived, to be thought *neceſſary* to be both: and how things *little by little* may have beene received under *old* names, which would not have beene ſo at *once* under *new* ones: (the

firſt

first of these being no such small fault but that part of the *Montanists* heresie was thinking *uncommanded* fasting daies *necessary* to be observed, which without doubt might *lawfully* have beene kept.)

But my maine answer is, that if for an opinion to be in the Church without knowne precedent *opposition*, be a *certaine* note of being received from the beginning, let them answer, how came in the opinion of the *Chiliasts* not contradicted till two hundred yeares after it came in. § 47.

To conclude, if they can prove that the Scripture may be a certainer teacher of truths to *them* then to *us*, so *they* may conclude the *infallibility* of the Church out of it, and *we* nothing; If they can prove the Churches *infallibility* to be a sufficient *Guide* for him that *doubts* Which is the Church, and cannot *examine* that (for want of learning) by her cheife marke, which is *conformity* with the Ancient; If they can prove that the *consent of Fathers* long together (if they had it) is a stronger argument against *us*, then against the *Dominicans*; If they can prove that though the first of them affirme that such a thing is *Tradition*, and beleived by all Christians (and this assertion till a great while after uncontradicted) yet *they are not* bound to receive it, and, upon lesse grounds, *we are*; If indeed *any* can prove by *any infallible way* the infallibility of the Church of *Rome*, & the necessity under paine of damnation for all men to beleive it, (which were the more strange, because *Iustin Martyr*, and *Clemens Alexandrinus* among the Ancients, and *Erasmus* and *Ludovicus Vives* among the modernes, beleive some Pagans to be saved) I will subscribe to it, And § 48.

Ὅσις ἕνυς τῆδε τῇ πόλει, θανὼν
Καὶ ζῶν ὁμοίως ἐξ ἐμοῦ πιπύσεται. *Sophoc.*

If any man shall vouchsafe to thinke either *this*, or the Author of it, of value enough to confute the *one* and enforme the *other*, I shall desire him to doe it with proceeding to the businesse, and not standing upon any small slip of mine, (of which sort this may be full) and with that Civility which is fit to be used by men that are not so passionate as to have the definition of reasonable § 49.

creatures in vain; (remembring that *truth* in likelihood, is where her Author *God* was, in the *still voice*, and not in the *loud wind*; And that *Epiphanius* excuseth himselfe if he have called any Heretiques in his anger, *Deceivers*, or *Wretches*, εἰ παροξυνόμενός τι λέγοι ἀπατεῶνας καλῶν ἢ ἀθλίους) and I request him also to bring me to the *Truth* (if I be out of it) not onely by his *arguments* but also by his *prayers*: which waies if *he* use, and *I* still continue on the part I am of, and yet doe neither ἑκὼν τυφλώττειν, nor ὁρῶν ἀναισχυντεῖν, neither am wilfully blind, nor deny impudently what I see, then I am confident that neither *he* will have reason to be offended with me in this world, nor *God* in the *next*.

FALKLAND.

FINIS.

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